



To Stain or not to Stain?

WINTER WEATHER ADVICE

If the rumours are true then we are set to see a harsh winter this year making it even more important to protect your exterior timber, and even more difficult to do so.

Before the bad weather really sets in and starts taking its toll on your timber, give all of your wooden products a quick health check to see if anything needs repairing, replacing and re-treating.

If you just need to apply a **single maintenance coat** then advice is pretty simple. Wash the wood down with water and detergent to remove any dirt, algae and loose bits then leave to dry fully. In a garden magazine there was a simple way to check if your timber is dry enough to treat with a woodstain. They suggest dripping some water on to the surface and observe what happens. If the wood is waterlogged the droplets will stay on the surface but if it soaks in then it should be dry enough to apply a wood stain. However, this isn't a fool proof method as the surface of the timber may be perfectly dry but the inner layers still damp. The only way to tell for sure is to test it with a protometer if you happen to have one lying around. If the reading shows a moisture content less than 20%, you're good to go!

With dry wood and a spell of mild dry weather that is set to last for 48 hours, apply your maintenance coat and your timber will be fully protected. The drying period is extended in winter as the sun is not as strong and the atmosphere more humid.

In cases where the previous coating has started to deteriorate you will need to remove the old coating and go back to bare timber. You can remove coatings by sanding or using a pressure hose then sanding lightly afterwards. As above, make sure the timber is fully dry before applying any wood stain.

For **old softwood**, a base coat of **Wood Preserver** would be advisable to protect against rot and decay. Protek's water-based Wood Preserver is a revolutionary product that is moisture regulating and provides an adhesive surface for subsequent treatment with a top coat, such as Protek Royal Exterior. Wood Preserver is absorbed deep in to the layers so can take quite a while to dry fully in winter. Allow at least 48 hours for the 1st coat to dry and apply the second coat in the next spell of dry weather. As soon as Wood Preserver has dried it will offer some protection against rain due to the high levels of resins in the formula, so you don't need to feel pressured in to rushing ahead with the job before its ready. You could leave a gap of a week or two before applying the weather-proofing water-repellent top coat just to make sure it is completely dry and ready to go.

The **top coat** will provide a fully **water-resistant coating** and colour if desired. You can use any good product and **Wood Stain & Protector** or **Royal Exterior** from Protek's woodstains range would be perfect!

If you don't need to use Wood Preserver then skip straight to this stage.

Make sure that the surfaces are clean and dry. Apply one coat (not too thick) and leave to dry fully for at least 48 hours. This coat will provide some protection against the weather so you could leave it a week or two before applying the second coat if a decent spell of dry, mild weather isn't on the horizon.

Apply the second coat when the weather allows and leave to dry fully for another 48 hours. If you rush these coats and put a second coat on when the first coat is only touch dry, both coats will take 72-96 hours to dry. A frost, freeze or sustained rain or shower will ruin both coats and all of your hard work and money will be wasted.

If you want to apply a third coat (for instance if you're using a light shade of Wood Stain & Protector on dark timber), don't rush, just take your time as the timber will be fully protected after 2 coats so chill-out (excuse the poor pun) and just put it on when time and weather allows.

SIMPLE RULES

- * If your timber or a previous coating is not fully dry, do not apply.
- * If the weather is set to rain within 48 hours, do not apply.
- * If the temperature is due to fall below 5-8°C within 48 hours, do not apply.

